

Notes for discussion of the AAA program

by W. H. Darrow, Director, Division of Information, AAA, U.S.D.A.

THE "AMERICAN WAY"

Our National ideal has always been of America as a land where the common man could own property, live in freedom, and be his own boss. Events of the last 25 years have been shattering that belief. We have been losing our soil, our ownership, and been forced to accept lower standards of living. If we are to right that situation, to restore the balance that will assure the "American Way," we must face the facts and get to work in a business-like manner. And in getting to work let's see what caused this situation.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY EMERGES

Early Developments

The first World War almost completely changed the basis of our agriculture which had been built upon the domestic market plus extensive exports. Change from debtor to creditor nation reduced export outlets. We continued and even raised tariffs, but effects were obscured by immense foreign loans in the 20's which sustained agricultural exports until loaning stopped and depression set in. That something was happening during the 20's is shown by the McNary-Haugen and Farm Board efforts, both aiming at surplus disposal.

With the general depression of 1929-32 came surpluses, low prices, low buying power, foreclosures, "want in the midst of plenty" and despair.

The Nation Decides

During the depression the Nation, unconsciously perhaps, made a momentous decision that no longer would industry and commerce be built at the expense of agriculture; hence -- a group of programs (FSA, SCS, REA, and others) featured by:

The AAA of 1933 which dealt mainly with controlling production to remove surpluses, improving prices, and getting purchasing power (which faulty functioning of our economic system had failed to distribute) out into the country, because to function, any economic system must distribute purchasing power; otherwise the system collapses. The government supplied what the system failed to supply. As the first AAA program progressed it developed more and more emphasis on soil conservation, but the entire movement was rudely arrested by the Supreme Court decision of January 1936, which knocked out the processing tax method of financing the program.

The AAA of 1936 was a conservation program which only partly accomplished the conservation job because it could not control acreage and production, nor sustain income -- all necessary to real conservation.

The AAA of 1938 is a well-rounded program based on conservation, which brings with it acreage adjustment, and abundance through crop storage loans and the ever-normal granary. All are necessary to conservation.

JAN 27 1940
1.94
Ad. 45 184

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
TEL. 773-709-3000

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
TEL. 773-709-3000

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
TEL. 773-709-3000

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
TEL. 773-709-3000

THE SWING TO CONSERVATION

Through the development of these programs has come a growing realization of the seriousness of soil decline. We have become aware of the factors in land development in the U. S. that make for soil deterioration.

Prairie Soils Presented Different Problem

Land development in the U. S. and all new agricultural lands in the world settled in the last 200 years have been prairie soils which differ from the forest soils of Europe. European soils developed slowly through hundreds of years and European farming methods proved to be such as to keep soil income and outgo balanced.

New Methods Destructive

Some methods applied to prairie soils have proved disastrous. Settled agriculture on prairies is something new to man. They are ideal farm lands but the old cultural methods and the new exploitative farming have proven destructive, have promoted both wind and water erosion.

All over the new agricultural world the towns and cities and civilizations have been built up by swapping new world soil capital for Old World money capital. Few have realized that soil fertility is exhaustible. We have lived on our soil principal, and it has been costly.

Seriousness of Soil Decline

One of the chief differences between the earth and the moon is a thin skin of life-giving soil averaging 6 to 7 inches thick. Without it the earth would be as lifeless as the moon. Averaged as a whole, the U. S. has lost 1/4 of this covering. Some estimate that we would lose 1/2 of it within 30 years if nothing were done; and some authorities believe that within 100 years the U. S. would cease to be a world power were we to go on farming the old exploitative way.

Soil conservation is fast becoming the Nation's No. 1 problem. We thought we had conquered Nature but dust storms and floods show that we have not yet learned how to come to terms with Nature on a basis that will permit us to continue to live indefinitely. We will not reach that point until we learn how to keep soil income balanced with soil outgo. It calls for much more serious effort than has yet been put forth.

THE PROBLEM OF CONSERVATION

Conservation costs money. It costs money to save and build soil, to restore Nature's balance, and furthermore it can't be done by "broke" farmers. The Nation must and will insist that the soil be conserved, and whether farmers should do it for nothing is beside the point. Farmers will not and cannot conquer the soil problem without financial assistance and protection. It is tragic we started our efforts so late, and the social cost will necessarily be great.

Many Measures Must Work Together

Conservation requires acreage adjustment and the ever-normal granary as well as positive soil-building practices. All are conservation measures. Whether the farmer thinks he can or not, the Nation can't afford to sell soil fertility at 10 cents a bushel for corn or 25 cents a bushel for wheat. This senseless planting and producing beyond need is soil wastage that must stop. Acreage reduction must be greater in the future than now if we are to win the conservation fight. Conservation calls for temperate farming of which acreage allotments are an important part.

The Ever-Normal Granary is a thrift program which stores soil fertility in the granary from fat year to lean year instead of spilling it out in a great flood to be wasted at ruinous prices in the fat years leaving starvation to hold sway during the lean ones.

Prosperous Rural Citizenship Needed

Conservation requires a rural citizenry that is fairly prosperous. Conservation calls for investment, and poverty can make no investments. The acreage allotments and ever-normal granary stabilize and adjust production to needs, and the loans and payments which are essential to these and to the other conserving measures such as soil building practices, are the Nation's guarantee that parity with other groups will be restored to farmers. Without such measures agriculture cannot continue to function on a basis of free competition in an industrial monopolistic country without undergoing profound change. Most industry controls production and price, and avoids competition; farmers, small manufacturers, and small business men are on a competitive basis.

Must Reach Every Farm

To be effective, such a well-rounded conservation program must reach every farm. The job of this democracy is to solve these problems through the cooperative effort of 6,800,000 farmers working together and with their government. It could be done through the compulsions of a dictatorship but that is not the American way. It is longer and harder the democratic way, but it is the only way that will enable us to preserve our liberty and our private property.

The job has been entrusted to the farm people themselves in an unusual experiment in economic democracy. The AAA program represents a loan of Federal powers to farmers to use in working out the salvation of the soil and people on it. There has been nothing like it before. Whether farmers succeed in this effort to bring man and the land into harmonious working relationship depends largely on making the situation and the program understood by both farm and town people. Farmers must break through the "circle of the faithful" to get their story to the doubting and the uninformed. On the success of education, no less than on the wise and effective use of the powers entrusted to them, depends in large measure whether the farm proves to be the anchor of democracy.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The history of the world is a long and tedious story, but it is one that is full of interest and variety. It is a story of the struggles of man against nature, of the triumphs of the human mind, and of the progress of the human race. It is a story that is full of lessons for the present and for the future.

The history of the world is a long and tedious story, but it is one that is full of interest and variety. It is a story of the struggles of man against nature, of the triumphs of the human mind, and of the progress of the human race. It is a story that is full of lessons for the present and for the future.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The history of the world is a long and tedious story, but it is one that is full of interest and variety. It is a story of the struggles of man against nature, of the triumphs of the human mind, and of the progress of the human race. It is a story that is full of lessons for the present and for the future.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The history of the world is a long and tedious story, but it is one that is full of interest and variety. It is a story of the struggles of man against nature, of the triumphs of the human mind, and of the progress of the human race. It is a story that is full of lessons for the present and for the future.

The history of the world is a long and tedious story, but it is one that is full of interest and variety. It is a story of the struggles of man against nature, of the triumphs of the human mind, and of the progress of the human race. It is a story that is full of lessons for the present and for the future.